

Finding of No Significant Impact
Nelson Mining Plan of Operations
Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0021-EA

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance [40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1508.27] and have determined the actions analyzed in EA# DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2008-0009-EA would not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the above EA, using the following factors defining significance:

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The Environmental Assessment considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action (Alternative B). Authorization of Sharm Nelson's Mining Plan of Operations would result in minimal short-term adverse impacts to soils, vegetation, wildlife, and air quality. (pp. 11-18, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0021-EA)

2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

The Proposed Action would not have any appreciable effect on public health or safety.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

No effects on any unique characteristics were identified in the EA. There are no park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas in the proposed sale area.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

Placer gold mining has occurred in the Boise Basin since 1862. Early placer gold mining in the area was done on a much larger scale than what is proposed for this project. The analysis did not identify any scientific controversy associated with the impacts from the proposed mining plan of operations (pp. 5-18, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0021-EA).

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The analysis did not identify any effects on the human environment which are highly uncertain or involve unknown risks. (pp. 11-18, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0021-EA)

6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The action analyzed in the EA is a common practice that has been successfully implemented in the area. The proposed action would not set a precedent for future actions that have significant effects. The action would be consistent with decisions and direction established

in the 1988 Cascade Resource Management Plan. (pp. 3-18, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0021-EA)

7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

The EA considered potential cumulative impacts of the proposed action within the cumulative effects analysis area and concluded that implementation would not cause significant cumulative effects on biological, cultural, or social resources, even when considered in relation to historical mining practices. (p. 18, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0021-EA)

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific or cultural resources.*

Based on the analysis, the proposed action would not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific or cultural resources. (pp. 17-18, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0021-EA)

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

No threatened or endangered species are known to inhabit the project area. (pp. 12-15, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0021-EA)

10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.*

The proposed action was developed in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws for the protection of the environment. The EA disclosed the effects of the proposed action on all critical and non-critical elements, and it was determined that the proposed action would not violate any laws or requirements.

/s/ *Tate Fischer* 9/30/2014

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